

Having no companions among the wild birds this pigeon often lingers around our poultry. On occasions it feeds on wheat on the ground with the fowls. It is remarkably tame and is easily approached. Often attention is drawn to it by the loud whirring noise of its wings when it takes flight.

—DIGBY DARLINGTON, Shackleton.

Spider Predator on a Vertebrate.—On February 20, 1955, about half way between Morawa and Pintharuka, a specimen of the Theraphosid spider *Scelenocosmia crassipes* (Koch) was observed to have at the bottom of its burrow a malodorous, mutilated specimen of a frog. It is of interest that in some parts of the world Theraphosids are called "Bird-eating Spiders". The frog was partly bound up with web and after this was removed it was possible to measure and identify the specimen. It was identified as *Heliophorus centralis* Parker and it measured approximately 3.20 cm. The spider was not grossly larger than the prey, measuring 4.30 cm. from the front of the chelicerae to the tip of the abdomen, excluding the spinnerets. Presumably the spider killed the frog outside the burrow since there was no damage to the flimsy silk lining, which damage would have undoubtedly occurred if the prey had struggled within the burrow. Several days before the above discovery there had been in the area a thunderstorm with heavy rain, after which many frogs surfaced and formed breeding congresses in nearby creeks. It is believed that the only other record of an Australian spider feeding on frogs is the observation of Mrs. L. Watson (reported in McKeown's book "Australian Spiders", 1952, Angus and Robertson) of *Atrax formidabilis* (Rainbow), the tree funnel-web spider, feeding on the tree frog *Hyla caerulea* (Shaw). Although terrestrial insects form the main part of the diet of *S. crassipes* the above record shows that it can and actually does occasionally take vertebrate prey.

—BARBARA YORK MAIN and A. R. MAIN,

Zoology Department, University of Western Australia.

Unusual Cuckoo Hosts.—When Mr. I. C. Carnaby and I were bird observing at Tunnel Creek on Turee Station, north of the Ashburton River, on July 31, 1955, we came across a rarely recorded instance of the Black-eared Cuckoo (*Misocalius osculans*) parasitising the Yellow-tailed Thornbill (*Acanthiza chrysorrhoa*). The nest was situated in a clump of mistletoe on a Casuarina and contained two eggs of the thornbill and one of the cuckoo. The eggs of the thornbill were typical in colour and measured 16.0 x 12.1 mm. and 16.1 x 11.7 mm. The cuckoo's egg was a deep chocolate, measuring 19.2 x 14.5 mm. The only previous example of this combination was reported from Central Australia and details are given by A. J. North (*Nests and Eggs*, vol. 3, 1912, p. 15).

On the following day, August 1, we found a nest of the Banded Whiteface (*Aphelocephala nigricincta*) on the Turner Flats, a few miles south-west of the Mulgul Station homestead. This nest, which was situated in a wax-bush approximately 18 in. above the ground,